Brunel University London

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY: SPACE, PLACE AND SOCIETY RESEARCH GROUP SYMPOSIUM

EXPERIENCING AND REIMAGINING THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS: CRITICAL, CREATIVE AND EQUITABLE PLACES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2024
EASTERN GATEWAY BUILDING ROOM 003
BRUNEL UNIVERSITY LONDON
9:30 - 16:30

EXPERIENCING AND REIMAGINING THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS: CRITICAL, CREATIVE AND EQUITABLE PLACES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Symposium

30th April 2024 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Eastern Gateway Building 003/A
Brunel University London

This international one-day symposium examines the role the university campus plays in higher education and the local community. The university campus has become a focus of research interest in the UK and beyond. Changes in higher education, the student body and student experience, the increased digitalization of society along with the challenges of post-COVID engagement have begun to prompt a reimagining of both the physical form of the campus and its civic role across the UK and the world.

The symposium, organised by the Brunel University's Human Geography: Space, Place and Society Research Group, focuses on three themes:

1. The relationship between the campus and the local community
2. Supporting belonging: campus and sense of place
3. The changing role of campus in a transforming society

In particular, the symposium aims to expand intellectual curiosity and share research and suggestions around the role of university campuses as sites for critical, creative, and equitable higher education and civic institutions.

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

9:30 – 10:00 a.m.	**Registration and coffee**
10:00 – 10:10 a.m.	**Welcome** Dr Emma Wainwright, Professor Nicola Ansell and Professor Monica Degen
10:10 – 10:30 a.m.	**Brunel University Campus: an Introduction** Professor Andrew Jones, Vice Chancellor, Brunel University London
	The changing role of campus in a transforming society
10:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Professor Clare Melhuish (Urban Lab, UCL) *The changing role of campus in a transforming society*
11:00 – 11:15 a.m.	Dr Ellen McHugh and Dr Emma Wainwright (Brunel University London) *On-campus free food provision: reconsidering universities' role and responsibilities in meeting students' food security needs*
11:15 – 11:30 a.m.	**Discussion**
11:30 – 11:45 a.m.	**Coffee Break**
	Supporting belonging: campus and sense of place
11:45 – 12:05 p.m.	Professor Ola Uduku (University of Liverpool) *The Post-2020 University Campus – New Ideas for Space and Place*

12:05 – 12:25 p.m.	Chris Morris (King's College London) *Consumer dissatisfaction or citizen unrest? The role of law in shaping and regulating students' consumer and citizen identities within campus spaces*
12:25 – 12:45 p.m.	Dr Stuart Andrews (Brunel University London) *Creative Approaches to Campus Design*
12:45 – 1:00 p.m.	**Discussion**
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	**Lunch**
1:20 – 2:00 p.m.	**Campus walk** Jeremy Tanner (Executive Director of Campus Services, Brunel University London)
	The relationship between the campus and the local community
2:00 – 2:30 p.m.	Dr Sally Lloyd-Evans and Dr Alice Mpofu-Coles (University of Reading) *Dismantling the walls of the university campus through participatory research, community engagement and social action in Reading*
2:30 – 2:45 p.m.	Dr Daniel Gutiérrez (Lleida University) and Professor Monica Degen (Brunel University London) *Voices of Uxbridge: re-imagining Uxbridge Town with local communities*
2:45 – 3:00 p.m.	Dr Isobel Ward (Brunel University London) *Creative Connections: Universities as hubs for local creative ecosystems*
3:00 – 3:15 p.m.	**Discussion**
3:15 – 3:30 p.m.	**Coffee Break**
3:30 – 4:30 p.m.	**Roundtable discussion with all speakers** Q&A led by Nicola Ansell
4:30 p.m.	**Close**

ABSTRACTS

The changing role of campus in a transforming society

Professor Clare Melhuish (Urban Lab, UCL):
Since the Brunel University campus was designed in the late '60s, to fulfil the vision of free mass higher education ushered in by the Robbins Report, prevailing concepts of what a university is and should be in modern society have changed significantly. In the 21st century we have witnessed a new boom in construction of buildings for higher education that reflects this shift, shaped by the marketisation of university courses, cuts in public funding, and the so-called triple helix model of university operation. This talk will touch on aspects of university development that have materialised as a result of these social changes, particularly the re-urbanisation of the university campus, and reflect on the role of university campuses in re-imagining cities, with reference to the new UCL East campus in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Dr Ellen McHugh and Dr Emma Wainwright (Department of Education, Brunel University London):
In the 2021/22, one in ten students used a foodbank, and in 2023, one in four UK universities was operating a foodbank for their students (HEPI, 2023). This paper maps the increase in campus free food provision across England to reconsider the role, purpose and responsibilities universities and their campus spaces have in meeting students' basic food security needs. We discuss the on-campus free food interactions and 'touch points' that exist across different English universities to highlight the evolving role of higher education in addressing structural issues of student poverty.

Supporting belonging: campus and sense of place

Professor Ola Uduku (University of Liverpool):
This presentation seeks to explore the transformation of University campuses from their historical 'hallowed' space image and function to today's contemporary spaces which offer themselves to engagement with the local communities in which they are situated. With the global covid pandemic has further forced tertiary institutions to further re-evaluate their relationship with space, as universities all globally closed their doors for much of the duration of the pandemic. This need to rethink or re-set our relationship with the campus varies, from

the pushback from Western institutions to carry on as normal with only a few tweaks post pandemic, to more structural and fundamental changes to campus use in parts of the Global South where access to digital communications coupled with better infrastructural maintenance and investment have enabled a reappraisal of the intellectual and physical relevance of the campus space.

Chris Morris (King's College London):
Campus spaces can blur distinctions between public and private land. This is pronounced in Manchester's 'Oxford Road Corridor', where several higher education institutions co-exist alongside 'public' industry and amenities. Students navigate this hybrid public/private realm in distinct ways, mediated through their contractual connection(s) to the land. Various contracts (of education, accommodation, finance etc,) connect students with other stakeholders in, and users of, campus spaces, and students' consumer rights are balanced with citizenship interests that together form the regulatory framework underpinning the student experience on campus. Recent examples from Manchester, of student protest in response to COVID lockdown measures, of rent strikes and occupations of educational and administrative facilities, and of other forms of civil disobedience involving university buildings, demonstrate the unique position of students as being subject to overlapping legal regimes operating in campus spaces. It is necessary to scrutinise this legal infrastructure to evaluate how students might overcome power imbalances to equitably exercise their rights as both consumers and citizens.

Dr Stuart Andrews (Brunel University London):
In this paper I will reflect on ways in which artists engage with and enquire into place. In so doing, I will consider how arts practice might offer new perspectives on campus design and development. The work is grounded in practice and research on performances of place, and the ways arts practices speak with architecture and urban design. The paper attends particularly to the ways in which artistic processes can playfully and productively reimagine familiar places, in this case, a university campus. I will focus this paper on the campus of Brunel University London, which has been a critical site for discussion by the Human Geography: Space, Place, and Society research group, of which I am a member. This work emerges from my research on intersections between performance, place, and resilience. For solo/joint authored publications, see https://performingcityresilience.com/publications/.

The relationship between the campus and the local community

Dr Sally Lloyd-Evans and Dr Alice Mpofu-Coles (Dept of Geography and Environmental Science University of Reading):
University campuses are often constructed around spaces of 'them' (the university) and 'us' (local communities), structures and barriers that prevent social change and civic engagement. Dismantling the walls of the campus with local communities not only enriches belonging and participatory learning for students and staff, but is also key to the inclusiveness, internationalisation and impact of education and research on social transformation. We discuss how participatory research and learning with student community champions and community led research networks respond to the impact agenda and decolonisation of knowledge and help foster more equitable cultures of co-production with local communities for social action.

Dr Daniel Gutiérrez (Lleida University, Spain) and Professor Monica Degen (Brunel University London):
Drawing on a long-term collaboration between Brunel University and Hillingdon Council we organised in June 2023 the interactive exhibition "Echoes of Uxbridge" in a local shopping mall. It showcased research on Uxbridge's town centre perceptions and experiences, as well as interrogating what changes are needed to foster a lively and equitable town centre for its diverse user groups. We engaged the local community, academic experts, and charities in a conversation about Uxbridge's changing urban, cultural and social landscape while creating a sense of belonging and ownership. "Echoes of Uxbridge" became an active agent, driving reflection and debate about its evolving urban environment. The exhibition was instrumental in informing the Uxbridge Masterplan community consultation, advocating for significant financial and civic investment in its social infrastructures. The successful collaboration between Uxbridge's communities, charities, council, and Brunel University demonstrated the value of academic-community partnerships.

Dr Isobel Ward (Brunel University London):
Intermediaries are vital to the success of local creative ecosystems. Creative hubs within universities can drive and facilitate exchange between academia and the creative industries for research, new collaborative funding opportunities, strategic thinking that builds capacity of creative clusters, and development of societal and economic impact. But it can be a constant juggle between political, financial, academic, and creative priorities. I will reflect on some of the ways that we, and other organisations, seek to cross-boundaries and work with, often small and micro, businesses, and community stakeholders.

Brunel University London

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

EXPERIENCING AND REIMAGINING THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS: THE CHANGING ROLE OF CAMPUS IN A TRANSFORMING SOCIETY

09:30 **REGISTRATION AND COFFEE**

10:00 **WELCOME**

THE CHANGING ROLE OF CAMPUS IN A TRANSFORMING SOCIETY

10:30 **CLARE MELHUISH** (URBAN LAB, UCL)

11:00 **ELLEN MCHUGH AND EMMA WAINWRIGHT** (BRUNEL UNIVERSITY)

11:15 **DISCUSSION**

11:30 **COFFEE BREAK**

SUPPORTING BELONGING: CAMPUS AND SENSE OF PLACE

11:45 **OLA UDUKU** (UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL)

12:05 **CHRIS MORRIS** (KINGS COLLEGE LONDON)

12:25 **STUART ANDREWS** (BRUNEL UNIVERSITY)

12:45 **DISCUSSION**

13:00 **LUNCH BREAK**

13:20 **CAMPUS WALK JEREMY TANNER** (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS SERVICES, BRUNEL UNIVERSITY)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CAMPUS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

14:00 **SALLY LLOYD-EVANS AND ALICE MPOFU-COLES** (UNIVERSITY OF READING)

14:30 **DANIEL GUTIÉRREZ** (LLEIDA UNIVERSITY) **MONICA DEGEN** (BRUNEL UNIVERSITY)

14:45 **ISOBEL WARD** (BRUNEL UNIVERSITY)

15:00 **DISCUSSION**

15:15 **COFFEE BREAK**

15:30 **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

16:30 **CLOSE**

09:30 - 16:30
TUESDAY, 30 APRIL

Eastern Gateway Building
ESGW 003/A

Find out more
BRUNEL.AC.UK/RESEARCH/GROUPS/HUMAN-GEOGRAPHY